

169hh- The Context Of Your Suffering.

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(A Summarised Transcription From A Hillside Hermitage Dhamma Talk)

Mn121:

"His mind enters into that perception of forest and acquires confidence, steadiness, and inclines towards it. He understands thus: 'Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of village, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of people, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of forest.' He understands: 'This field of perception is empty of the perception of village; this field of perception is empty of the perception of people. There is present only this non-emptiness, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of forest.' Thus he regards it as empty of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: 'This is present.' Thus, Ananda, this is his genuine, unperturbed, pure, emptiness."

You can use the perceptions of the forest to establish your mind so that you're not bothered by anything in the village. It's not the actual perceiving of the forest or staring at a forest and repeating to yourself that it's a forest, which is usually the popular way of doing meditation. It's quite the opposite. It's about being able to establish the perception of the forest when you're not in the forest. That's how it's done rightly. Which means it's not an actual perceiving on the level of your five senses, it's on the level of the mind, which you discerned and became familiar with, while you were in the forest.

Your mind is then established upon a context (peripheral awareness), of the circumstances and environment which provides a basis for more particular action. So even though you might be in the village, if your mind refuses to abandon the context of the greater forest, your time in the village, is only going to be minimal because your mind inclines towards the context which it has developed, which happens to be the forest.

If you develop the context of the forest, no particular sight, sound, smell, taste, touches from the village will be able to affect you, because the mind still perceives itself based on the context of the forest. But if you get careless and forget about protecting the greater context, you will start giving into particular sight, sound, smell, taste, touches in the village, you will drop off from the context of the forest and your senses will pull you all over the place. So, once you are established upon the greater context of the forest, all you need to do is guard your senses on a particular basis as in, just don't intentionally go with the unwholesome, and the context of the forest will be maintained.

If you understand this principle, you can go even further, for example, what's an even greater context than the context of the forest? When you look higher, you can find or uncover (not create) the context of the earth, planet earth, element of earth, call it whichever you want,

whether you're in the forest, whether you're in the town, you are on earth. But as I said, to truly start developing the context of the earth, you will need serious renunciation concerning particular things in your environment. How can you develop or transcend a greater context, when you still refuse to let go of the lesser? If you develop a mind upon the context of/sign of earth, it would result in you not even regarding your own body as belonging to you. And that's why the Buddha encouraged it. Contemplating the four elements will result in dispassion towards this particular manifestation of material form which is within the greater context of earth.

Whenever you look at this body, it's made of the same elements that everything else in the world is composed of, which means, all of that is inferior to the great basis of the context of earth that provides these elements. So I'm saying this because sometimes people can think that simply by thinking about the great earth, they're developing the context, but you will know you're developing the context, when concern for your own life and body, senses failing, sickness and so on, disappears. In that sense, you could see how the context determines the extent of your perception. The extent to which the perception of the earth is developed defines everything particular that comes your way as to whether you're going to be affected by it or not.

You can continue to develop even more refined perceptions than the earth, such as water, fire, air, the four colors, the infinite space and consciousness which is the most refined of them all, because it's the context of simple presence, whether it's suffering that's present, happiness, perception of the village, etc, all have in common, 'presence', it has arisen.

But you don't have to develop (discern clearly) all these different extents/contexts, the extent of earth can be enough for final liberation. Because to properly develop the context of the earth, you will have to abandon everything inferior to it, such as any sense of ownership concerning this particular insignificant little body. You can see how all these great mountains here are already greater than your body. They're going to be here longer than you. They've been here longer than you ever will be. Yet, it's through not seeing that context, not allowing it to endure, not knowing how to maintain it in the background of your mind, why you get pulled with particular senses, perverting the whole picture, whereby you are the center, you are the context.

For an unenlightened mind, the five modes of being or the contexts of the five hindrances, determine the particular actions. Would you be able to engage with sensuality, if the context of sensuality is not pushing you that way? If you haven't given in to the pressure of the context of sensuality, would you be deciding the particular acts towards sensuality? No. But then at the same time, if you were not doing the particular acts of sensuality, would that context be maintained? No, because it needs maintenance. You need to be engaging in sensuality to maintain sensuality. That's why sense restraint has to come first. You stop maintaining it so that you can discern the general Nature of things which are general perceptions that you can use to abandon inferior ones, and they don't require your doing. 'The Nature of things' does not require you for it's maintenance, unlike the hindrances.

What is the Nature of things? It's the context of things. And the Dhamma is the universal

context. And what's the most universal about anything? It's that it has arisen on its own, that it cannot provide that lasting satisfaction of ownership and because of that, it cannot be owned. Anicca, dukkha, anatta are universal contexts. The highest context is, 'I can't own anything even if I want to'. And that context can become your mode of being through the clarity of comprehension you developed regarding it. Nothing particular then will be able to sway you or disturb you. Because you don't even own this body, let alone anything that can come through the senses.

So, for example, if you truly understood the fundamental context of anicca, regarding everything that has a nature to manifest that's *sotapatti*, which is the understanding that "whatever has the context of arising, because of that, has the context of cessation", and the context of non-ownership, non-appropriation, indifference, dispassion, all these other contexts come from that realized/developed fundamental context of anicca.

How can you discern/develop/realize such a context? The only method is learning what the context is and then making an effort to discern it.